

Introduced by

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 25-03.1-11 and 25-03.1-19 and subsection 2
2 of section 25-03.1-26 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to involuntary treatment and
3 commitment procedures.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 25-03.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **25-03.1-11. Involuntary treatment - Examination - Report.**

8 1. The respondent must be examined within a reasonable time by an expert examiner
9 as ordered by the court. If the respondent is taken into custody under the
10 emergency treatment provisions of this chapter, the examination must be
11 conducted within twenty-four hours, exclusive of holidays, of custody. Any expert
12 examiner conducting an examination under this section may consult with or
13 request participation in the examination by any qualified mental health professional
14 and may include with the written examination report any findings or observations
15 by that mental health professional. This examination report, and that of the
16 independent examiner, if one has been requested, must be filed with the court.

17 The report must contain:

- 18 ~~1.~~ a. Evaluations of the respondent's physical condition and mental status.
19 ~~2.~~ b. A conclusion as to whether the respondent is a person requiring treatment,
20 with a clear explanation of how that conclusion was derived from the
21 evaluation.
22 ~~3.~~ c. If the report concludes that the respondent is a person requiring treatment, a
23 list of available forms of care and treatment that may serve as alternatives to
24 involuntary hospitalization.

4. d. The signature of the examiner who prepared the report.

2. If the expert examiner concludes that the respondent is not a person requiring treatment, the court may without taking any other additional action terminate the proceedings and dismiss the petition. If the expert examiner concludes that the respondent is a person requiring treatment, or makes no conclusion thereon, the court shall set a date for hearing and shall give notice of hearing to the persons designated in section 25-03.1-12. If the respondent is in custody and is alleged to be suffering from mental illness or a combination of mental illness and chemical dependency, the preliminary hearing date must be within ~~seven~~ four days of the date respondent was taken into custody through emergency commitment under section 25-03.1-25 unless a delay or continuance is concurred in by the respondent or unless extended by the magistrate for good cause shown. If a preliminary hearing is not required, the treatment hearing must be held within ~~seven~~ four days of the date the court received the expert examiner's report, not to exceed fourteen days from the time the petition was served.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 25-03.1-19 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

25-03.1-19. Involuntary treatment hearing. The involuntary treatment hearing, unless waived by the respondent or the respondent has been released as a person not requiring treatment, must be held within fourteen days of the preliminary hearing. If the preliminary hearing is not required, the involuntary treatment hearing must be held within ~~seven~~ four days of the date the court received the expert examiner's report, not to exceed fourteen days from the time the petition was served. The court may extend the time for hearing for good cause.

The respondent has the right to an examination by an independent expert examiner if so requested. If the respondent is indigent, the county of residence of the respondent shall pay for the cost of the examination and the respondent may choose an independent expert examiner.

The hearing must be held in the county of the respondent's residence or location or the county where the state hospital or treatment facility treating the respondent is located. At the hearing, evidence in support of the petition must be presented by the state's attorney, private counsel, or counsel designated by the court. During the hearing, the petitioner and the respondent must be afforded an opportunity to testify and to present and cross-examine

witnesses. The court may receive the testimony of any other interested person. All persons not necessary for the conduct of the proceeding must be excluded, except that the court may admit persons having a legitimate interest in the proceeding. The hearing must be conducted in as informal a manner as practical, but the issue must be tried as a civil matter. Discovery and the power of subpoena permitted under the North Dakota Rules of Civil Procedure are available to the respondent. The court shall receive all relevant and material evidence which may be offered as governed by the North Dakota Rules of Evidence. There is a presumption in favor of the respondent, and the burden of proof in support of the petition is upon the petitioner.

If, upon completion of the hearing, the court finds that the petition has not been sustained by clear and convincing evidence, it shall deny the petition, terminate the proceeding, and order that the respondent be discharged if the respondent has been hospitalized before the hearing.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT. Subsection 2 of section 25-03.1-26 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

2. Upon receipt of the petition and notice of the emergency detention, the magistrate shall set a date for a preliminary hearing, if the respondent is alleged to be suffering from mental illness or from a combination of mental illness and chemical dependency, or a treatment hearing, if the respondent is alleged to be suffering from chemical dependency, to be held no later than ~~seven~~ four days after detention unless the person has been released as a person not requiring treatment, has been voluntarily admitted for treatment, has requested or agreed to a continuance, or unless the hearing has been extended by the magistrate for good cause shown. The magistrate shall appoint counsel if one has not been retained by the respondent.